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1 May 1985BY Barry Schweid, AP Diplomatic Writer
WASHINGTON

The Soviet Union has proposed a freeze in offensive nuclear weapons in an effort to "lock in" its edge in missiles over the United States, senior U.S. arms control adviser Paul H. Nitze said today.

In a prepared speech, Nitze called the proposed moratoriums in both long and intermediate-range weapons "discredited" and old.

"The strategy underlying the Soviet approach seems clear," Nitze said. "The Soviet Union is pleased with the current strategic situation. They possess substantial advantages in several key measures of strategic offensive nuclear power, particularly in prompt counterforce capability."

The speech, before the National Press Club, divulged some of the give-and-take in the first round of U.S.-Soviet negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland, which wound up last week.

At the opening of the talks in March, the U.S. and Soviet negotiators adopted a "confidentiality rule" to screen their discussions from the public. According to U.S. officials, it prohibits the negotiators from discussing details of the talks.

But Nitze, who advises President Reagan, is not a member of the U.S. delegation.

In the speech, Nitze said the Soviets' goal is to "abort" Reagan's strategic weapons program and to roll back the scheduled deployment of new U.S. nuclear missiles in Western Europe.

At the same time, he said, the Soviets have proposed a ban on research, testing and deployment of the U.S. anti-missile program known as Star Wars because "the Soviets fear that the West's superior technological base could give us an advantage in the more exotic defensive technologies, and they want to prevent this," Nitze said.

On Tuesday, a senior U.S. official who demanded anonymity blamed the Soviet Union for "no constructive move forward" in negotiations to slow the nuclear arms race.

That official said the Soviets not only had failed to put new proposals on the table in the Geneva talks but "backtracked" on offers they had made in the past.

He said it was possible the talks already had reached an impasse, but that a judgment was being withheld until results of the first round, which wound up last week in the Swiss city, were reviewed.

"There's been no constructive move forward, but it's what I expected," the official said.

He said the Soviets had not threatened a walkout and "were perfectly willing to discuss meetings into the fall." The next round is due to open on May 30.

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